



Harbor Areas and Harbor Lines

The Harbor Areas is the area between the inner and outer harbor lines, located on state-owned aquatic lands in front of cities, and up to one mile beyond city limits. Washington State's Constitution requires that Harbor Areas forever be reserved for landings, wharves, streets, and other conveniences of navigation and commerce. The state's system of Harbor Areas was developed to protect land-to-water and water-to-land transportation.

As manager and steward of the 2.4 million acres of state-owned aquatic lands, Washington's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administers the state's Harbor Areas, which are established and modified by the state Harbor Line Commission.

When DNR receives a request for a Harbor Line relocation, it acts as staff to the Harbor Line Commission, and is required to process applications for these changes. Recognizing potential conflicts between Harbor Area development and environmental protection, DNR has moved toward bay-wide planning to consider the needs of multiple jurisdictions, property interests and other players in a variety of aquatic environments before making a recommendation to the Commission. As a part of this process, DNR gathers public comment from the community and interested parties potentially affected by the proposed harbor line relocation. Ultimately, DNR prepares a final report of recommendation to the Harbor Line Commission.

Port of Bellingham Harbor Line Review

DNR received an application for Harbor Line Relocation from the Port of Bellingham on June 26, 2006. The proposal requests the relocation of both the inner and outer harbor lines in front of the City of Bellingham.

Please review the available documents included and send your comments and/or questions to: david.roberts@wadnr.gov